

# Reflections of 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Nursing Students in Australia on Improving their Cultural Competence in relation to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander health

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# Presentation Aims

- To explain key student learning outcomes of developing cultural competence through self-reflection whilst learning about health issues of Aboriginal and Torres Islander people, families and communities
- To explore the interplay between critical reflection, personal narratives and improving cultural competence

# Background

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up approximately 3% of the Australian population (ABS, 2014)
- Social, cultural and historical determinants of health influence the disparate health status and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

# Background

What we already know:

- The reflective journey: moving from  
“Knowing your place → Being in-place”  
(Johns, 2014, 16)
- Cultural competence  
(Dudgeon & Walker, 2011).

# Methodology & Methods


- Qualitative study approach
- 76 second year nursing students participated
- Students' reflective narrative writings about the development of their cultural competence were collected early and late in the teaching session

# Analysis

- Thematic analysis (Giorgi, 1985)
- Cultural competence process (Camphina-Bacote, 2008):
  - Cultural awareness
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Cultural skill
  - Cultural encounter
  - Cultural desire

# Findings

- 3 major themes of student narratives
  - Cultural awareness
  - Critical reflection
  - Potential for partnerships in healthcare delivery



*'malparara'* – two people  
working and walking  
together as friends



# Malparara

- Sparked students' imaginations to envision future nursing practice:

*"I can see myself working with Indigenous health workers with excitement because of the things that I can learn from them" (Ppt 39)*

*Going for my Indigenous Health placement in July is going to be my first real opportunity to make malparara a reality in my life and nursing practice – I am excited for it!*

*(Ppt 37)*

# Malparara

- Empowered students to engage with making a difference:

*From what I have learnt I feel empowered to make a difference...My pre-conceived ideas of being a nurse in a hospital helping people has changed. I want to work as a nurse in the community, I want to work with Indigenous people, more so Indigenous children (Ppt 3)*

# Malparara

- Improved cultural competence for effective nursing practice

*Working and walking together as a friend means to me to assist each other in our role, bring different but equally valued skills, this is a way in which better health care could be delivered....in practice it means that slowly we can repair the relationship between Indigenous and Non Indigenous people. Malparara could be practiced also by... enhancing my own knowledge and understanding their past. By respecting Aboriginal ways of life I personally participate in Malparara. By working and walking together with Indigenous people I add to the healing process of the wounds that were caused during colonization (Ppt 47)*

# Interplay between critical reflection, personal narratives and cultural competence

*“When I first started this unit I felt I had a broad understanding of the Indigenous way of life but going through this [reflective writing workbook] I realised there is a lot more involved than what you hear in the media and through stereotypes that often cloud judgment” (Ppt9)*

# Implications for nursing practice

- Development of essential nursing competencies for:
  - Improving health literacy in Australian Indigenous populations
  - Culturally sensitive communication
  - Collaborative approaches to nursing practices, processes and policies

# Implications for nursing education

- Confirmed the relevance of reflective narrative writing
- Transformative learning experiences

# References

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